

Popular Commotions considered as Signs of the approaching End of the World.

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S E R M O N, &c.

S. H. R. M. O. N. & C.

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S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

METROPOLITICAL CHURCH OF CANTERBURY,

On SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1789:

WITH

AN OCCASIONAL PREFACE.

By WILLIAM JONES, M.A. F.R.S.

MY DOCTRINE IS NOT MINE, BUT HIS THAT SENT ME. JOHN, vii. 16.

—REGE INCOLUMI, MENS OMNIBUS UNA EST;
AMISSE, RUPERE FIDEM, CONSTRUCTAQUE MELLA
DIRIPUERE IPSÆ.—

Virg. Georg. iv. 212.

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From the records of the Synod of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1844-1845.

MEMORIAL

MEMORIAL OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, TO THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NORTH, 1846.

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1845.

AND IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1845.

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P R E F A C E.

IT was my design to insert the following Discourse into a collection now ready for the press, which will be published in two volumes, as soon as I and the printer can perform our respective tasks. But the curiosity of the Public having been unexpectedly raised by the singularity of its subject, and the reflections suggested by it; this Discourse may be better attended to if sent abroad now, than if it were detained till its companions shall be ready to set out with it.

I do not here presume to meddle with the constitution of our own country, farther than to pray, as a peaceable citizen, that the whole of it may be preserved, to the prince on the one hand, and the people on the other, with all its rights and privileges, If all
men

men were of my mind, I think there would be no fighting in the field, no faction in the city; no arguments, but for the truth; no competition, but for the first opportunity of doing good. With politics, commonly so called, that is, with the political administration of our own government, and the views of opposite parties, I have no concern. The chief duty required in a preacher, is to warn *all parties* against the delusion of false principles and fashionable errors; consistent neither with the word of God, nor with the preservation of the public peace by the authority of magistracy, under any form of government whatsoever: to represent the dangerous consequences of affecting the licentious maxims of heathenism; or of attending to the visionary schemes of modern infidels, such as Voltaire, who captivates the eye with a glitter of diction, but never had any just ideas of religion, government, good learning, or good manners. Of politics thus understood, that is, of the Christian *morality of civil life*, which is the only subject I am concerned with at present, we may speak freely and without fear; with our duty for our rule, and the word of God for our guide and our authority: and woe be unto us, when we shall either be ashamed to speak, or deprived of the necessary liberty of giving seasonable warnings, when counterfeits are abroad!

abroad! As things are now, we may, and after the blessings we have so lately received we should be unpardonable if we did not, recommend loyalty, as the duty, the honour, and (the present times permit me to add) the *gratification* of the people of England; and to hold up the mischiefs and miseries of anarchy for a terror to those whose duty it is, and whose wisdom it will be, to provide against them, before that evil day comes upon us when there shall be no remedy.

This is the thing I attempted to do some ten years ago; but I was rather unfortunate, and may be said to have been a loser by my loyalty; as many better men have been of late times, in a worse sense. I bestowed some thought and pains upon two discourses on the two great apostolical precepts of civil life, FEAR GOD, HONOUR THE KING; which I printed at the request of my audience, and particularly of the worthy clergyman of the parish, who, like myself, was a friend to the plain old-fashioned doctrine of the church of England. But after a few copies were sold, and more were enquired for, the edition was missing in the bookseller's warehouse! Whether it had strayed, or was stolen, or seized as contraband, I could never yet learn. However, when these two sermons shall be printed again,

again, and well guarded on the right and left by the other discourses of a volume, I hope they will be able to keep their place; and, which is more, to maintain their ground, if they should be attacked according to the rules of war; which chance was not allowed to them before.

I had often enquired into the meaning of those remarkable words of our Saviour, which I have here chosen for a text; but my mind was turned to them more particularly of late, on occasion of the unhappy tumults in several parts of Europe: and it so happening, that I had put a few of my thoughts hastily together at the time when I preached at Canterbury, I had a desire to try how they would be received by the audience; that I might take advantage of the experiment, for the improving or correcting what I was about to hazard on so weighty and so alarming a subject. The discourse itself will shew, that I proposed with some diffidence my own sense of the text, although that sense is perfectly conformable to the language of the Scripture in other places. There hath been time enough for several judicious persons to take it into consideration; of whom some readily agree with me, while others are in doubt: so I must leave my readers to take either side, as they

think proper ; remembering that the main doctrine of the Sermon is clear enough from other parts of the Scripture.

I rather feared that my Discourse, according to the common lot of addresses from the pulpit, might be thought upon, at the time of its delivery, as a matter of curiosity in speculation, and be but little regarded afterwards. And it might perhaps have passed off, like other things of the kind, and been forgotten ; but that a person, whose character it seems is well known to his neighbours, and has been freely delineated, thought proper to write me a scurrilous letter in the newspaper, and to sign his name at the bottom of it : for which I am so much obliged to him, that I hope the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, to many of whom I have long had the honour of being known, will do me the justice to believe, that I did not hire that man to rail at my Sermon, in order to give all honest people a better opinion of it. In respect of any private confederacy upon this occasion, we are perfectly pure and uncorrupt : and if the alarm that gentleman hath given should assist in bringing my subject to be more attentively considered by those who are better disposed and better qualified to judge of it, that may be a good thing

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thing for us all, at the present juncture of affairs. As to the unmannerly language in which he hath been pleased to do me this piece of service, it is a very light matter with me to be railed at by name in newspapers and reviews. If my character or my writings are such as they have been invariably represented in the Monthly Review, I have been but of little use in the world, and might as well have been left out of it. My labours in divinity and philosophy having in them no tincture of schism or focinianism; and, as such, not falling in with the plan of the editors for improving our creeds, articles, and religious establishment—have been from time to time most unmercifully mangled and vilified. Even my musical studies, perfectly innocent and unprovoking, and well received by some of the first masters in the science, could not escape the lash of defamation. When the second edition of my late Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Scriptures was about to come from the press, a most bitter invective appeared against the first, and its author; evidently written by some person who, from his imperfect knowledge of the Scripture, and his declared disaffection to its doctrines, was not qualified to read the work, or any other of its kind.

Criticism,

Criticism, in this age, is a trade which requires no apprenticeship. But we are all bound to consider, seriously, that something besides learning, commonly so called, is necessary to us, if we would judge rightly of the doctrines of Christianity, when they are delivered from the pulpit, or published from the press. The mind of man hath its dangerous appetites, as well as the body ; and, if it is under the dominion of any lust or fancy, the understanding gets strangely out of order, and becomes but of little use. We see notorious instances of the perverseness of human judgment in the case of the Jewish doctors, when they took upon them to *review* the doctrine which our blessed Saviour preached amongst them : and, if Christians should happen to be sick in their minds of any Jewish distemper, they will never fail to judge with the like rashness and absurdity. Our Saviour told them, that, if any man would *do the will of God, he should know of the doctrine whether it be of God**. From whence the inference is obvious—that, if a man does not do the will of God, he shall not know of the doctrine, whether it be of God ; but shall rail at and accuse the preacher, as if he had invented it himself. Thus did the Jews, because they were proud, envious, sensual,

* John, vii. 17.

and avaricious, and had been very ill taught from their childhood. If a man, therefore, instead of *doing the will of God*, should have done such things as mark his character with infamy ; and should also have a plan for repairing his fortunes, ministering to his vices, or gratifying his ambition, by troubling government and overturning the laws ; that man must be in danger of some mistake, when he comes to decide whether the Christian doctrines and duties of loyalty and obedience have been rightly stated in a sermon.

All good and sober men have reason to dread the time, when *they* shall obtain the bench of the judge, who are more fit for the seat of the scornful. For, in a state of anarchy, when that power which is lawful and limited is overturned, that which is unlawful and unlimited takes place ; and then he has a chance to be the greatest man who is the most wicked. It was undoubtedly this prospect which made Catiline in time past, and doth now make many of the sons of liberty, so active, and all honest and peaceable citizens so fearful of their success : for the preventing of which, according to our several stations and opportunities, we ought to unite our endeavours, without considering whether we shall be applauded or condemned ; and
trust

trust in God, to whom only we shall be accountable at last, for the good effect of them.

This Discourse having made more noise than the author expected, hath been communicated in manuscript to several gentlemen of learning and piety; one of whom saith in return, “ What has been honey to us, will be
“ gravel in the mouth of patriotism; for our good coun-
“ trymen are *exceedingly mad* upon the subject of go-
“ vernment* : and it is almost as dangerous to speak
“ against liberty here in England, as it was formerly
“ for the Apostles to disparage the great goddess Diana
“ at Ephesus—it is an idol to which even human vic-
“ tims are sacrificed, &c. &c.”

Another friend, whom I shall not scruple to place (although he is a young man) among the first scholars of the age, sent me a discourse of his own, intended for the last *Accession-day*: in which he hath drawn a comparison betwixt the present situations of the king of France and the king of England, so just, and so edify-

* The reader may have a view of the popular absurdities propagated amongst us of late years, if he reads the Seventh Disquisition of the late Soame Jenyns, Esq. on *Government and Civil Liberty*, which abounds with strong sense, and has many pleasant observations.

ing to English readers, and so elegant, that, after reading it over several times with tears in my eyes, I have asked his permission to print it in this Preface, as very proper for the time, and falling in with the matter of my own Discourse.

“ Behold the sad condition of that kingdom,
 “ which was once the haughty rival of our greatness.
 “ Where are now its glories? its pretensions to uni-
 “ versal dominion? Consider the royal city: it was
 “ full of riches: wisdom and power once dwelt in it;
 “ but now murderers! Her gates lament and mourn;
 “ and she, being desolate, sitteth on the ground. A lying
 “ spirit is gone forth; and, under the specious form of
 “ a zeal for truth and liberty, and the rights of man,
 “ hath deceived the people to their destruction: its
 “ truth, profaneness and infidelity; its liberty, disobedi-
 “ ence to all lawful authority; its rights of man, the
 “ most daring violation of all divine and human laws.
 “ Such are their mischievous tenets, however artfully
 “ disguised under high-sounding names and false appear-
 “ ances. *By their fruits ye shall know them.* Pestilent
 “ fruits of pestilent principles! ingrafted at the mo-
 “ ment when they assisted a country of rebels in an
 “ unnatural war against the parent state. Now, to obey
 “ the

“ the sovereign, is treason ; to do the duty of a loyal
 “ citizen, and a member of society, is profligacy ; to op-
 “ pose the ravages of a murderous banditti, a crime de-
 “ serving of death, and punished with it. Meantime their
 “ laws are unable to give protection to their govern-
 “ ment; and their government is too weak to give
 “ efficacy to their laws. From such truth, such liberty,
 “ and such rights as theirs, may the God of all mercies
 “ deliver us !

“ But let us not be insensible to their distress, nor tri-
 “ umph in the day of their calamity. He who visibly
 “ chastises them for their iniquities, is equally able, on
 “ just cause, to chastise this now prosperous nation. And
 “ has he not just cause? Let us not be high-minded,
 “ but let us fear. If ingratitude be most criminal when
 “ most important favours have been received ; if igno-
 “ rance, when the best means of knowledge have been
 “ afforded ; if vice, when there are most incentives to
 “ virtue ; oh let us not be high-minded, but let us
 “ fear !

“ Instead of drawing a parallel between the two
 “ kingdoms, let us consider the present situations of
 “ their respective kings. If the welfare of the people
 “ consti-

“ constitutes the sovereign’s felicity, we cannot hesitate
 “ to pronounce one prince the most miserable, the other
 “ the happiest, of mankind. The one has to con-
 “ template a falling, the other a rising state.—The one
 “ beholds distresses he cannot alleviate, wrongs he can-
 “ not redress, and enemies he cannot punish. The
 “ other sees the beneficial effects of order and good
 “ government, happily secured by laws which are a ter-
 “ ror to the wicked, and a protection to the good and
 “ virtuous.—The one, a wretched prisoner in the hands
 “ of his enemies, sighs in vain for an opportunity of
 “ escaping from the miscreants which surround him.
 “ The other passes at pleasure from place to place, free
 “ as the people over whom he presides.—The one,
 “ violently deprived of those guards which he con-
 “ sidered as the means of safety more than the appen-
 “ dage of royalty, starts from his broken slumbers with
 “ the apprehension of midnight treason. The other
 “ seeks for no security but from the providence of
 “ God, and the fidelity and love of his people.—The one,
 “ under that species of mental servitude most galling
 “ to the soul, is compelled to flatter wretches whom
 “ he must despise, and to countenance measures he must
 “ abhor. The other, by his wise and judicious govern-
 “ ment, compels the spirit of faction to hide its head in
 “ the

“ the deepest darknefs.—The one beholds widows and
 “ orphans weep: the other, it is true, fees tears, but
 “ they are the tears of rapturous loyalty; tears which
 “ do honour to the fubject, the fovereign, and to hu-
 “ man nature itfelf.—The one is told of proceffions,
 “ whereof the mangled bodies of his fervants, their
 “ heads borne infultingly along the difcoloured ftreets
 “ of the capital, the confufed noife of the multitude,
 “ and their garments rolled in blood, form the moft
 “ diftinguifhing features. Far different proceffions
 “ adorn the other’s empire; proceffions which religion
 “ and gratitude dictate; proceffions which demonftrate
 “ that, when it goeth well with the righteous, the city
 “ rejoiceth.—The one hears the din of rebellion, the
 “ yell of famine, the fhriek of defpair: where the
 “ other appears, the fky is rent with joyful acclama-
 “ tions.—The one receives meffenger after meffenger
 “ from the diftant provinces, with horrid intelligence
 “ of rapine, infurrection, and mafacre. The other trusts
 “ not to report, however favourable; his own eyes be-
 “ hold the general happinefs, even in remote parts of
 “ his dominions: every where is our common father
 “ received with tranfport by his admiring fubjects;
 “ while in their feftive garlands he almoft fees realized
 “ the pleafing fiction, which fpeaks of flowers spring-
 C ing

“ing up under the feet of the ancient heroes.—The
 “one, in the vain hope of rescuing his people from the
 “state of national bankruptcy which awaits them, has
 “recourse for temporary relief to the most mortifying
 “expedients; and, as the treasures of the king’s house
 “are insufficient, applies, like the Jewish sovereigns in
 “their distress, to the treasures of the house of the
 “Lord. The other sees his subjects increasing in riches
 “and power, and enjoying the best blessings of peace;
 “and he devotes his own attention, in more than one
 “magnificent instance, to the beautifying the house of
 “his God.—The one, equally a stranger to public and
 “private happiness, seeks in vain for those domestic
 “comforts, which might atone in some degree to the
 “*man* for the sufferings of the *prince*. The other finds
 “all his joys increased, and rendered more grateful, by
 “the society of the best and most illustrious of her
 “sex, the partner of his throne and of his virtues.—
 “Lastly, we see that the one has no future hope but in
 “some distant revolution, which probably cannot end
 “without sacrificing thousands of his infatuated peo-
 “ple: and with mingled pity and indignation we
 “behold royalty humbled in the dust; while we hear
 “a monarch exclaim, in the agony of his heart—
 “Troubles desolate my kingdom!—evil and sorrow
 “oppress

“ oppress me !—calamities penetrate my soul !—the
 “ pomps and pleasures of the throne are to me bitter-
 “ nefs and affliction! What, on the contrary, are the fu-
 “ ture prospects of our sovereign ? He has only to wish
 “ for a continuance of the blessings poured on himself
 “ and his people ; he has only to pray that the God,
 “ whom he so faithfully serves, would translate him,
 “ when full of years, and full of glory, to that king-
 “ dom where only his present felicity can be ex-
 “ ceeded.”

I have taken no time to consider, whether the print-
 ing of this extract will be a disadvantage to my own
 composition which is to follow ; because there is so
 little jealousy betwixt me and my friend, that I shall
 find a pleasure in the preference which may be given
 to the rectitude of his sentiments, and the force of his
 expressions.

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S E R M O N.

LUKE, xxi. 25, 26.

And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

THE authority of God's laws, and of his ministers, to keep a fallen world in order, and secure to the good and virtuous the blessings of peace, is one of the greatest and best gifts of an over-ruling Providence. But we have reason to fear, that, as the world degenerates, and Christian piety declines, this blessing will not be preserved to us.

There will always be difficulty in the language of a prophecy which foretels an event not yet come to pass: therefore I would not venture to decide hastily in a matter of some obscurity. But it seems highly probable, from the language of our Saviour in the
text,

text, that the last age of the world shall be troubled, in an unusual manner, with popular tumults and commotions; arising partly as the natural and necessary fruits of wild and novel opinions, and partly from the just judgment of God upon those who have forsaken him.

Before we consider critically the words of the text, we may judge what will happen before the destruction of the world, from what did actually happen on certain other occasions, which have been marked as prophetic of that event. Before the coming of the Son of Man, it shall be as it was in the days before the flood—the earth was *filled with violence*: the word signifies *injustice, rapine, and robbery*. A state of *violence* is contrary to a state of *security*; for violence taketh away what government was ordained to secure. The heathen Poet, describing the corrupt state of men before the flood, takes care not to omit this remarkable circumstance; telling us, in his language, that *the Fury of Discord then prevailed far and wide over the world**.

The city of Sodom was in a state of anarchy when it was destroyed. All the people, old and young, assembled themselves without restraint from every quarter, to commit acts of wickedness and violence. They mocked at all authority in others, and were judges and executioners in their own right.—*This one fellow (said they) came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them*†.

Before Jerusalem was destroyed, the fact is undoubted in history, that they were plagued with tumults and intestine commo-

* Qua terra patet, fera regnat Erynnys.—OVID. Met. i. 241.

† Gen. xix. 9.

tions. The benefit of government was lost amongst them; and troops of thieves and rioters, with self-commissioned leaders, plundered the city in a miserable manner, at their own discretion; till all were involved in one common catastrophe, when the place was stormed by the Romans.

From these cases the application is short and certain—As it was before the flood, as it was in Sodom, as it was in Jerusalem, so shall it be before the end of the world.

If we go now to the text, we find, from the context, that our Lord is there describing those signs which shall precede, not the destruction of Jerusalem, but his own glorious advent to judge the world. The words of the passage cannot with any propriety be confined to the people of a city or a nation; being evidently spoken of the *nations* of the Gentiles, and of the whole *habitable world**.

Yet this application brings us into a difficulty: for if the nations of the world are intended, the distress here mentioned seems too partial in its kind to reach them. None but people on the sea-coast can be terrified with the raging of the sea: on which consideration, some commentators have supposed that the distress here spoken of was meant of Galilee and of the sea of Tiberias. But this is out of all reason, when compared with the context: we are therefore compelled to take a method of interpreting, which will bring the language up to the occasion. The words of a prophecy seem to speak of one thing, when another thing is intended;

* The words in the original are *ἐθνη* and *οικουμένη*.

and that must be the case here. We know there is a sort of sea to be found in every inland country; the figurative sea of popular tumult and rebellious violence: much more terrible and destructive to the peace of mankind, than all the storms which agitate the ocean.

The poet and the prophet describe things rather by their properties and effects, than by their vulgar names. Therefore the Scripture compares the multitudes of the world to the waters of the sea; and the tumultuous rage of the people to the terrors of a storm. In the prophet Isaiah, the *abundance of the sea** is put for the *forces of the Gentile* world, which should be turned to the church of Christ. In the same style, the harlot in the Revelation of St. John is said to *sit on many waters*†; as signifying the imperial power of heathenism which ruled over the Gentile world. And in a vision of Daniel, the four beasts, representing the four monarchies, rise out of a sea‡, on which the four winds of heaven are all blowing at once; to signify, that they all arose from among the Heathens. Sometimes the text carries its own comment with it—Deliver me out of *great waters*, saith the Psalmist, from the hands of *strange children*§.

The waves of the sea, which lift up their heads, and assemble themselves farther than the eye can distinguish them, exhibit a grand image of an innumerable multitude of people; whom they resemble farther by the noise they make: whence the voice of a great multitude is compared to the voice of many waters. But,

* Isa. lx. 5.

† Rev. xvii. 1.

‡ Dan. vii. 2, 3.

§ Psalm cxliv. 7.

above all, the waves of the sea are most like to a multitude when tumult and disorder prevail amongst them. As the waters are then driven together; each wave that follows endeavouring to mount over that which is before, and all dashing against the shore, from whence they are beaten back into the sea by their own violence: such are the people, when they are assembled together without order or government. The turbulent passions of men are never to be restrained from breaking out into noise and confusion, but by that Power which over-rules the waters of the sea. God is therefore celebrated for the one under a figure of the other: *Thou stillest the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people**. When wild passions prevail amongst men, and there is no authority to keep them in awe, then society becomes what the sea is, when the winds are let loose upon it. There is then no more reason or judgment in the one than in the other: all is drowned with noise, and lost in the confusion of a storm. And herein we may view the difference between the power of government and the power of the people: for the power of government is ordained of God, and supported by his providence, to still that storm, and prevent that confusion, which the power of the people raises. The one is the only remedy against the other. The one is the gift of God to a nation that serveth him; the other is his curse upon the disobedient who are departed from him. And as there is not a sight more agreeable to the goodness of God, and the sense of all wise and good men, than a nation well appointed, under good laws, and strict authority, and unanimous in exerting their strength under their lawful leader, for their common defence against their enemies; so is there not a spectacle upon earth more desirable to the

* Psalm lxxv. 7.

Devil, than the dissolution of law and authority, and the breaking of national power by the mercenary jarrings and contentions of opposite interests and factions. The disobedience which arises from civil dissension is a mother sin, which brings forth a brood of vipers. Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. And that this shall prevail more and more, and rise to a tremendous height in the last times, so as to unsettle the world, and keep men in a miserable state of fear and suspense; is not only to be expected from what the Scripture hath intimated, but from the state and temper of the world in this respect; which it behoves us impartially to consider.

When the Reformation took place in Europe, many tares were sown among the good grain of that time; and one of the most pernicious was the claim of what is called *liberty*; a very good word, when taken in a good sense; but used of old as a *cloak of maliciousness*, and always most affected by those who were themselves the *servants of corruption*. The thing recommended at first was *religious liberty*; and the notion stole into the hearts of men, because it seemed to be a necessary remedy against the odious abuses and encroachments of the church of Rome. However, even in this sense, fearful were the effects of it, when fanatics took it up, and acted in virtue of it, as their own wild imaginations directed; which is abundantly confirmed by the history of the Anabaptists in Germany, and such like people. But of late years, men have taken another monstrous stride; and, from asserting *religious liberty*, against the Pope, have gone on to claim a *natural liberty*, against all kings and rulers; with an equality of right in every man that is born to power and property. This they never could do as Christians, or men of common sense; so they have assumed the
new

new name of *philosophers* ; under which they set up a new religion of their own, with doctrines opposite in every article to those of Christianity.

The learning which is called classical is necessary to scholars, and hath many eminent uses ; but the vain affectation of it is always dangerous. This it is which hath induced many amongst us to emulate the furious spirit which prevailed in heathen patriots ; and to admire that most which was worst amongst them. They have little to say of the peace and splendour of the *Augustan* age, when men of greatest genius were loyalists ; of the greatness of the empire under *Trajan* ; its conversion under *Constantine* ; its order and jurisprudence under *Justinian* : but their favourites are the savage *Brutus*, the sneaking *Valerius*, the perfidious assassins of the great *Cæsar* ; and such like saints, of the true republican spirit.

The times of this world have shewn to us three sorts of people professing religion. 1. The believers and followers of God's revealed worship. 2. The practitioners of heathen idolatry. 3. The wise men of *Nature*, whose doctrines are many, and whose worship (if any) is from themselves. Of these three, the last are undoubtedly the worst. The Heathens, when they fell into idolatry, retained many traditionary notions, which were still near to the truth, and had some of its effects in civil society. But these last are utterly contrary to God and man ; and their opinions will consequently produce more absurdity, and extravagance, and violence, than was ever seen in the world before. Their favourite doctrines seem to be these : that where government is concerned, man is born with a right to think and to act as he pleases ; that all authority in others

is a dangerous imposition upon ourselves ; and that the property of others belongs equally to us, if we can get it. To all which, there is not a thief in the precincts of the metropolis, who will not readily subscribe, and who, consequently, will not contribute his influence, and give his personal attendance, when a standard shall invite him, and give him an opportunity of putting his principles in practice.

We have all heard what terrible effects the false principles of the last century produced in this kingdom ; and we have had a fearful specimen of the like, of very late years ; which, with the blessing of Providence, and an exertion of the still-remaining power of government, lasted but a few days.

In the British colonies of America, subjects who were peaceable, happy, wealthy, and prosperous, changed on a sudden into discontented insurgents. A wild spirit of independence prevailed ; and, by the just judgment of God upon a profligate mother, and untutored children, succeeded ; for a fatal precedent and encouragement to other wicked discontented people. Much sooner than we could have expected hath the contagion spread itself to a neighbouring country ; and, what is very striking, and hath been generally noticed, the same person whom they employed against the peace of this government, is the leader in their own disturbances. Their situation, by all true accounts, hath been dreadful and lamentable ; as that of every nation must be under the like circumstances. While the laws are in force, a man's house is his castle ; and his life, and fortune, and character, are secured to him : but when a lawless multitude is afloat, the best members of society are at the mercy of the worst. Every man is a convict, when his enemy is his accuser, judge, and executioner. There are no rays of mercy from a throne to save the
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the head of the unhappy victim from being made a spectacle upon a pole; no lawful force to protect his stores from being plundered, his lands laid waste, his buildings burned and demolished.

Now, when we hear these things, what are we to think of them? We have teachers at home, who are glad of what hath happened; who inform us, that these are the efforts of freedom; that murders and massacres are among the sacrifices proper to such an occasion; *i. e.* due to the idol of liberty, that Moloch which must be worshipped with human sacrifices; and that they hope to see the same incendiary spirit extend itself to other peaceable countries of Europe: in other words, they hope to see *distress of nations with perplexity*; encouraging the sea to rage, and the waves to roar and toss themselves, and exceed the just bounds which God hath appointed. If these evils should spread, and the like infatuation should prevail in other nations, the whole habitable world would be a theatre of desolation, a field of blood. The evils arising from such experiments are endless; the good to be expected from them is of a very equivocal nature; and the method of obtaining it is very unpromising. If the philosophical politician, from what we know of him already, were to model nations to his own wish, the world would be in a very vain, ignorant, corrupt, and, in many respects, a very miserable state. If all the jewels of imperial authority were thrown into the fire, nothing better than a calf would come out of it.

Popular tumult and division were the curse of the heathen world for many ages, when false liberty was become the object. The Apostle St. Paul describes them *full of envy, murder, and debate**:

* Rom. i. 29.

which was certainly the case with the republics of *Rome* and *Athens*. They were troubled with that proud, restless jealousy of power, which threw them into perpetual convulsions. To the abolition of kingly government they gave the specious name of *liberty*, and pronounced a state *free*, if it had no king: not considering that the many may be tyrants as well as a single person, and that nothing can make a people free but the exercise of such a power as restrains them from making *a prey of one another*. When the Romans put down their kings, they laid the foundation of a much greater and more extensive tyranny: and the celebrated orator of Rome, a professed admirer of republican government, lived to see such effects of it, as made him confess, in plain terms, that no king ever grasped at such tyrannical power as was affected by the popular magistrates of Rome*. The history of that people, for five hundred years, presents us with a scene of faction and disorder, proceeding from bad to worse, and degenerating into proscription, murder, and massacre; which he who sees and considers will never believe that the republican form was given to any people for a *blessing*. And the delusion of mind they were all under, at the same time, is worth your observing. It is found, by experience, that the cry of liberty arises commonly from the thirst of power; and that the same spirit, which is outwardly patriotical, is inwardly tyrannical. So it happened with these. For while they dreaded power in their own magistrates, and were always providing against it, they held it by a

* Verbum mihi deest, Quirites, cum ego hanc potestatem *regiam* appello: sed profecto major est quædam. Cic. de Lege Agraria Orat. II. § 14.—Renovabo illud quod initio dixi—*regnum* comparari, libertatem vestram funditus tolli. § 10.—They were using their interest for the establishment of a law, which would have put the lives and fortunes of the citizens, and the sale of the public lands, into their own absolute power for five years.

supposed charter from heaven, that all other nations were made to be their slaves; and, instead of paying taxes from their own property, they were eating up the substance of other people, and filling their treasury with the money drained from conquered provinces, whom they kept tributary to themselves; or with the spoil and plunder seized from them in war. It was the declared object of these lovers of freedom, to make themselves the arbiters and proprietors of other men's liberties, and bring them under absolute subjection. It is boasted of by one of their own historians, with what great labour, and how many bloody battles, they had brought *free nations to the Roman yoke, and taught them to be slaves* *. These are his very words.

The expedient to which the lower order had recourse for securing themselves from the oppression of the nobility, raised up that new set of tyrants, who were for ever troubling the state with some new sedition †, and for whom, according to the testimony of Cicero himself, the power of royalty was not great enough.

The providence of God used this hardy warlike people as a scourge to other nations; and so they appear under a great and honourable character: but their own false principles produced such domestic misery, as did justice in every age upon their own pride and ambition. And thus, high as they were, they found a way of bringing themselves down to a level with the nations whom they despised as barbarians.

* *Liberas gentes, ideò impatientes jugi, multo labore, nec incruentis certaminibus, servire docuerunt.* Flor. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 17.

† *Seditionum omnium causas tribunitia potestas excitavit, quæ specie quidem plebis tuendæ, cujus in auxilium comparata est, re autem dominationem sibi acquirant.* Ibid. lib. iii. c. 13.

The case of this people is very remarkable, and, if considered, may give us some light into the ways of Providence. For when God was about to reform the world by the introduction of the Gospel, he restored imperial government at Rome, where it seemed impossible for it to take effect against the violent prejudices of the people. He opened their eyes to see the miserable fluctuations in their former government; and the very people who had abhorred the idea of royalty, became so fond of it, that no Christian flatterers ever came up to them. In consequence of this wonderful work of Providence, the Gospel knows of no such government as a commonwealth. In the New Testament, *kings as supreme*, and those who were *sent by kings*, as the Roman governors of the time then were, are pointed out as the proper objects of civil obedience. But as the world draws toward its end, and God is about to destroy it, He, who turned commonwealths into kingdoms, may turn kingdoms into commonwealths: and that time may now be approaching.

I may be thought to overstrain the sense; but it is more agreeable to the context to suppose, that the *powers of heaven* which shall be *shaken*, signify the powers of government which shall be unsettled and removed from their old foundations. The powers in the natural heaven, the sun and the moon, which rule over the day and the night, are emblematical of empire and government upon earth*. And besides this, the Scripture admits of no *power* amongst men,

* Our late Bishop *Newton*, who was deeply versed in the language of prophecy, having quoted Isaiah, xiii. 9, 10, and Ezech. xxxii. 7, 8, and Joel, ii. 30, 31, in order to illustrate this very passage concerning the *shaking of the powers of heaven*, observes very justly, "In the prophetic language *great commotions and revolutions* upon earth are "often represented by commotions and changes in the heavens." *Dissert. on the Proph.* Vol. II. p. 305.

but what is *given them from above* : and in that sense also is the *power of heaven*. This power has long been disregarded by some, while its existence is denied by others ; and the object with all libertines is, to shake it, and cast it down, and shut it out of the world, and leave nothing but the power of the people ; which, if it be taken for the *power of authority*, is a thing consistent neither with religion nor common sense.

We are fallen into times, when the doctrine of the divine authority of government is received by the multitude with such pride, and impatience, and mockery, that it is plain their reason is disordered upon the subject. When their opinions prevail, and they are permitted to assume to themselves that power which belongeth only to God, no greater calamity can happen to any nation. This is the case at present with the people of a neighbouring country : and, surely, it is our duty to reflect upon that, as upon all the other ways of divine Providence. Some facts have been brought to pass of late years, so extraordinary in themselves, and of such magnitude, that we may justly be alarmed. For the same principles which have disturbed others, and brought their present calamities upon them, are at work daily amongst ourselves. It is to be feared they were borrowed from us* ; and if God, for the punishment of our manifold

* In the last century great danger arose to society from enthusiastic notions in religion. Of later years, a grand levelling hath been adopted, which tends to confound all right and property amongst mankind, and strikes at the authority of God himself in church and state. One of the first books, in which this was openly done, was called the *Rights of the Christian Church*. It undertook to prove, that the church is the creature of the state, and the state the creature of the people, and that God himself, as the governor of Israel, became such in virtue of a contract between himself and the people at Horeb. This precious piece was turned into French by *Le Clerc*, and put into his *Bibliothèque Choisie*, which went over Europe, and probably sowed some of those thistles, which are now springing up, and threaten to overspread the face of the earth.

ins and corruptions, should suffer them to take effect here, they will put arms into the hands of all the disorderly people in the kingdom, and overturn our constitution in church and state ; with such circumstances of *distress*, and *perplexity*, and terror, as can be conceived only by those who have been witnesses to such disorders.

From the prospect of things presented to us in the text, I beg leave humbly to suggest, in few words, how Christians ought to conduct themselves under such circumstances.

We, who teach, though in times that are bad, and daily altering for the worse, should never be ashamed of our true principles, nor weary of warning the people against the delusion of such as are false. If we should be opposed by those who treat us with scorn and contempt, for speaking as our duty requires, we should neither wonder, nor be troubled at it, but consider their insolence as a part of their distemper. Their opinion is of no more weight, when they extol *what they call liberty*, than when they deny Christianity : and we commonly find a strong propensity to do both, in the same person. Some assert their freedom against God's institution of marriage ; some against his institution of government : all promise themselves happiness in so doing ; but all find servitude and corruption. This we should endeavour to make the people aware of, and admonish them still to *pray for kings and for all that are in authority*, as Christians did of old, and as the Church of England directs us to do now ; that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

We are farther to insist, that God is fearful and just in his judgments ; that he abases those who exalt themselves ; that he violently

lently takes away honours and riches, when they are abused to the purposes of luxury and impiety ; that he lets the wild boar of the wood into the vineyard of his church, to trample it down and lay it waste, when its fruits are become sour, and unprofitable ; that men should therefore so live as to secure to themselves the protection of God, and be able to look up to him with confidence in the day of *distress* and *perplexity*. Whatever changes may take place here below, God is still the same. The Psalmist describes him as seated securely on high, upon the throne of his kingdom ; while the people, like the restless waves of the sea, are vainly raging below : *Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared—The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly ; but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.* Psal. xciii. *Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea : though the waters thereof rage and swell, and the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.* This world must come to its end : we should therefore not be dismayed at the *signs*, which make it probable that its end may be drawing near. For why ? The same sea, which destroyed the wicked Egyptians, gave deliverance to the chosen people of God. We should have no desire to put off the end of this world ; but should rather pray, as we are taught to do in the most solemn of our offices, that God would *shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom* ; that saints and martyrs, and all who have, and do, suffer for the cause of God and the name of Jesus Christ, may lift up their heads, and see their Deliverer seated upon the clouds of heaven.

Till this shall be brought to pass, let us not set our affections on the pleasures of this unsteady world, so apt to disturb and alarm us with the misery of present, and the terror of future, evils. Woe be
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unto those, who have not God for their confidence in the day of visitation!—*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man*—To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all power and dominion, in heaven and earth, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

